

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 01387 210838Z

41

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AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

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SUBJ: DEMIREL COMMENTS ON TURKISH AEGEAN EXERCISES

REFS: (A) ANKARA 1342 DTG 191605Z FEB 76 (B) ATHENS

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1. PRIMIN DEMIREL, RESPONDING TO JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONS

FEBRUARY 20, BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE FORTHCOMING TURKISH AIR

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 01387 210838Z

AND NAVAL EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN (REFTELS). DEMIREL STATED

THAT IT WAS TURKEY'S SOVEREIGN "RIGHT" TO HOLD MILITARY EXERCISES IN THE AEGEAN AND THAT NO PRIOR AGREEMENT WAS NECESSARY. ASKED ABOUT THE FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (FIR) PROBLEM, HE SAID THAT "EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO OBTAIN RESULTS WITHOUT SUCCESS. IN VIEW OF THIS WE CONSIDER OURSELVES FREE TO ACT, WITHIN REASON, IN A NUMBER OF THINGS."

2. THE FEBRUARY 25-26 MANEUVERS ATTRACTED INCREASED PRESS ATTENTION FEBRUARY 20:

(A) MASS-CIRCULATED GUNAYDIN, UNDER THE HEADLINE "IF THE GREEKS INTERVENE, THE TURKISH RESPONSE WILL BE VERY SEVERE," REPORTED THAT THE GREEK AMBASSADOR IN ANKARA "WARNED" THE MFA ABOUT THE EXERCISES AND INFORMED THE GOT THAT THE GREEK MIVY HAD BEEN PUT ON "ALERT" STATUS.

(B) MILLIYET FEATURED AN ASSOCIATED PRESS STORY FROM ATHENS REPORTING THAT THE GOG HAS DEMANDED THAT TURKEY NOT VIOLATE THE TEN MILE GREEK AIRSPACE AND THAT THE GREEK MILITARY WOULD BE CONDUCTING EXERCISES IN THE AREA "WITH LIVE BULLETS" THROUGH FEBRUARY 29. A SECOND MP/LIYET ARTICLE REPORTED THAT TURKISH MILITARY AUTHORITIES INTERPRET THE "GREAT ANXIETY" BEING EXPRESSED IN ATHENS AS AN "EFFORT TO CONFUSE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION AND CREATE UNWARRANTED EXCITEMENT." AN UNNAMED OFFICIAL WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "IF THE GREEKS ARE MOTIVATED BY THE IDEA THAT THE AEGEAN IS A GREEK LAKE AND IF THEY INSIST THAT THEY CAN RULE OVER INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND AIRSPACE IN THE AEGEAN, THEN THESE EXERCISES WILL SHOW THEM THAT THE AEGEAN IS NOT A GREEK SEA AND NEVER WILL BE."

(C) CUMHURIYET ALSO FOCUSED ON THE SIX VS. TEN MILE DISPUTE AND REPORTS THAT THE GOT SENT A NOTE TO THE GOG ON THIS SUBJECT THREE WEEKS AGO, BUT NO ANSWER HAD BEEN RECEIVED. THE ARTICLE ALSO STATED THAT ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM ATHENS, GREEK MILITARY CIRCLES VIEW THE EXERCISES AS "NORMAL" BUT ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON THE GREEK POPULACE. ACCORDING TO CUMHURIYET, THE "SOLE ANXIETY" OF THE GREEK GENERAL STAFF IS THAT THE DISPUTE OVER THE SIX VS. TEN MILE LIMIT COULD LEAD TO A DEADLOCK IN THE FIR TALKS.

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PAGE 03 ANKARA 01387 210838Z

3. COMMENT: THE ATTENTION GIVEN THE PLANNED MANEUVERS BY THE TURKISH PRESS HAS BEEN PRIMARILY AS A REACTION TO WHAT HAS APPEARED IN THE GREEK PRESS. AS YET THERE HAVE BEEN NO PUBLIC CALLS ON THE GOT TO PROVE THAT THE GOT WILL ACKNOWLEDGE ONLY A SIX MILE LIMIT. DEMIREL'S COMMENTS, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT JINGOISTIC, ARE NOT INFLAMMATORY AND HE WAS NOT ASKED ABOUT THE AIRSPACE ISSUE. HOWEVER, THE PRESS IS AWARE OF THE SIX

VS. TEN MILE AIRSPACE DISPUTE AND MAY BEGIN TO FOCUS ON IT.
TODATE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DEMIREL'S COMMENTS TO
REPORTERS, GOVERNMENT AND OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE MADE
NO COMMENTS ABOUT THE EXERCISES.
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